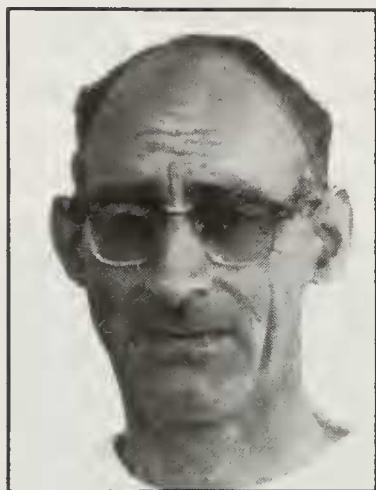


His hard-earned knowledge was freely available to anyone who asked and he made contacts and encouraged the study of the smaller moths to anyone who was interested throughout Kent in order to build as comprehensive a picture as possible, to aid his projected book spanning the period from 1900 to approximately 2000. Sadly this will not now be so. The information is on disk and it is to be hoped that someone else with the same love of Kent microlepidoptera that he had will take up the task and complete the work, and give him his due recognition for all his hard effort over the past years. His comprehensive collection of smaller moths is, it is hoped, being housed in Maidstone museum where it will be available for study by interested lepidopterists. He is survived by a son, grandson and daughter and, of course, Wiltrud, who gave him so much support and encouragement in the pursuit of his aim ... A Microlepidoptera of Kent.

Brian Elliott

### ALBERT SACCO



Reverend Albert Sacco, MBE, SM, was born on the 6 December 1920, at Port Said, Egypt. After spending most of his working life on several islands of the New Hebrides archipelago (Vanuatu), he died on the 29 January 2002 in Middlesbrough, aged 81. Among many other interests, Albert was a keen amateur entomologist; a new species of butterfly which in flight looked remarkably like *Papilio machaon* L., came to his notice on the island of Tanna, and was subsequently named *Polyura sacco* Smart, 1977. A second race from the islands of Espiritu Santo and Malekula was named *P. sacco santoensis* Lachlan, 1993. More recently, Albert Sacco was further honoured with the

description of a new hawk-moth from the islands of Ambrym and Espiritu Santo: *Gnathothlibus saccoi* Lachlan & Moulds, 2001.

Both Albert's parents were Maltese, and he was five years old when his doctor father brought the family from Malta to England in order to be near his brother, also a GP. Educated in his early years by English Jesuits in Malta, and later by Marist Fathers in Middlesbrough, Albert inherited from his father a love of nature, which remained with him throughout his life. The three brothers, of whom Albert was the second, made a successful team in collecting butterflies around faunally impoverished industrial Teeside. The youngest brother, Maurice, had the quickest eye; Albert had the netting skill, whilst elder brother Paul would carry out the subsequent mounting of specimens. War broke out whilst Albert was a young man. He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery, participating in the campaign following the allied landings in Normandy, and rising to the rank of Captain. Following cessation of hostilities in Europe, he was posted in September 1945 to northern India where he was promoted to the rank of Major. After demobilisation in June 1946, he was ordained into the Marist priesthood and posted to the New Hebrides to take over a mission station at Loanatom, Tanna in 1954.

He stayed in the New Hebrides (which became Vanuatu in 1980) for most of the rest of his life, serving at different localities on the islands of Aneityum, Espiritu Santo and Ambrym, as well as Tanna. Almost by definition, life in such surroundings resulted in many adventures, including the occasion when a tidal wave swamped Albert's Tanna church in the middle of the night. Its replacement, built almost entirely by Albert, was built on slightly higher land! On another occasion he became lost in thick mist whilst travelling in a small dinghy with a local companion between Pentecost and Espiritu Santo and drifted for three days without food or water. Linguist (in addition to Bislama, the national "pidgin", he spoke more than one Tannese dialect fluently), builder, artist, electrician, chess player and teacher, he was a pillar of local society wherever he found himself, being instrumental in setting up a number of primary schools on Tanna. Albert was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to education – although he rarely mentioned it, and detailed reasons for the award are not known to his family.

A visit to Tanna by the then British High Commissioner of the joint British/French Condominium, the late Sandy Burgess, in 1976, reawakened Albert's interest in butterflies. Sandy stayed with Albert and mentioned the existence of a butterfly on Tanna, which looked remarkably like the European swallowtail *Papilio machaon*. "Oh yes", said Albert "I'll take you to see one after breakfast tomorrow". As good as his word, Albert showed the High Commissioner where to find the *Polyura*, which commonly visits fermenting sap of the Mandarin Orange *Citrus reticulata*. Albert subsequently managed to rear *P. sacco* in reasonable numbers for sale, mainly in Japan, supporting the Mission on the proceeds until income from a new store made this unnecessary. A small collection of butterflies made by Albert, primarily on Tanna, was presented to the Cultural Centre in Port Vila but was largely destroyed by water damage during a typhoon in 1987. The remainder have now been rendered worthless by the ravages of sun and insect pests. This included the female allotype (paratype) of *Hypolimnas octocula tanna* Samson, 1986, which is no longer extant.

Albert Sacco retired from his church at Loanatom on the west coast of Tanna, and came to the UK to see his brother and sister, intending to return to Port Vila on the island of Efaté. Sadly, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour whilst in the UK, and spent the remainder of his days at a Catholic Convent, Nazareth House in Middlesbrough. Albert passed away whilst I was visiting Vanuatu, where he is remembered with great affection. As a French colleague said as we stood inside Albert's church, looking at one of Albert's wall paintings, "*He's one of the old school. There's nothing he can't do. Nowadays they send them out and all they can do is drive a car!*". Neither of us knew it until several weeks later, but Albert died the following day.

Thanks are due to Father Paulin Anicat (Vanuatu, Tanna) and to Albert Sacco's brother, Reverend Paul Sacco (Wales, Carmarthen), each of whom provided biographical information.

W. John Tennent